**CULTURE & SOCIETY**

**Culture and Society of Pakistan**

Pakistan has a rich and unique culture that has preserved established traditions throughout history. Many cultural practices, foods, monuments, and shrines were inherited from the rule of Muslim Mughal and Afghan emperors. The national dress of shalwar qamiz is originally of Central Asian origin derived from Turko-Iranian nomadic invaders and is today worn in all parts of Pakistan. Women wear brightly coloured shalwar qamiz, while men often wear solid-coloured ones. In cities western dress is also popular among the youth and the business sector.

Pakistani society is largely multilingual and 96% Muslim, with high regard for traditional family values, although urban families have grown into a nuclear family system due to the socio-economic constraints imposed by the traditional joint family system. Recent decades have seen the emergence of a middle class in cities like Karachi, Lahore, Rawalpindi, Hyderabad, Faisalabad, and Peshawar that wish to move in a more liberal direction,as opposed to the northwestern regions bordering Afghanistan that remain highly conservative and dominated by centuries-old regional tribal customs. Increasing globalization has increased the influence of "Western culture" with Pakistan ranking 46th on the A.T. Kearney/FP Globalization Index. There are an approximated four million people of Pakistani descent living abroad,with close to a half-million expatriates living in the United States,around a million living in Saudi Arabia and nearly one million in the United Kingdom, all providing burgeoning cultural connections.

**Music**

The variety of Pakistani music ranges from diverse provincial folk music and traditional styles such as Qawwali and Ghazal Gayaki to modern forms fusing traditional and western music, such as the synchronization of Qawwali and western music by the world renowned Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan. In addition Pakistan is home to many famous folk singers such as the late Alam Lohar, who is also well known in Indian Punjab. The arrival of Afghan refugees in the western provinces has rekindled Pashto and Persian music and established Peshawar as a hub for Afghan musicians and a distribution center for Afghan music abroad.

State-owned Pakistan Television Corporation (PTV) and Pakistan Broadcasting Corporation were the dominant media outlets, but there are now numerous private television channels. Various American, European, and Asian television channels and films are available to the majority of the Pakistani population \r\nvia private Television Networks, cable, and satellite television. There are also small indigenous

**Film Industries**

film industries based in Lahore and Peshawar (often referred to as Lolly wood). Although Bollywood films have been banned from being played in public cinemas since 1965, Indian film stars are still generally popular in Pakistan due to the fact that Pakistanis are easily able to buy Bollywood films from local shops for private home viewing. But recently Pakistan allowed selected Bollywood films to be shown in Pakistani cinemas.

The northern parts of Pakistan have many old fortresses, towers and other architecture as well as the Hunza and Chitral valleys, the latter being home to the small pre-Islamic Animist Kalasha community who claim descent from the army of Alexander the Great.

Punjab is the site of Alexander''s battle on the Jhelum River and the historic city Lahore, Pakistan''s cultural capital with many examples of Mughal architecture such as the Badshahi Masjid, Shalimar Gardens, Tomb of Jahangir and the Lahore Fort.

**Festivals In Pakistan**

There are many festivals celebrated annually in Pakistan - which may or may not be observed as national public holidays - e.g. Pakistan Day (23 March), Independence Day (14 August), Defence of Pakistan Day (6 September), Pakistan Air Force Day (7 September), the anniversaries of the birth (25 December, a national holiday) and death (11 September) of Quaide-Azam, birth of Allama Iqbal (9 November) and the birth (30 July) and death (8 July) of Madare-Millat. Labour Day, (also known as May Day), is also observed in Pakistan on 1 May and is a public holiday.

Several important religious festivals are celebrated by Pakistani Muslims during the year; the celeberation days depend on the lunar Islamic calendar. Ramadan, the ninth month of the calendar, is characterised by daytime fasting for 29 or 30 days and is followed by the festival of Eid ul-Fitr. In a second festival, Eid ul-Adha, an animal is sacrificed in remembrance of the actions of Prophet Abraham (Arabic: Ibrahim) and the meat is shared with friends, family, and the less fortunate. Both Eid festivals are public holidays, serving as opportunities for people to visit family and friends, and for children to receive new clothes, presents, and sweets. Muslims also celebrate Eid-e-Milad-un-Nabi - the birthday of the prophet MOHAMMAD (S.A.W.) - in the third month of the calendar (Rabi'' al-Awwal) and mark the Day of Ashurah on the 9th and 10th days of the first month (Muharram) to commemorate the martyrdom of Husayn bin Ali. Hindus, Buddhists, Sikhs, and Christians in Pakistan also celebrate their own festivals and holidays. Sikhs come from across the world to visit several holy sites in Punjab, including the shrine of Guru Nanak, the founder of Sikhism, at Hasan Abdal in Attock District, and his birthplace, at Nankana Sahib.

**Architecture**

The architecture of the areas now constituting Pakistan can be designated to four distinct periods â€” pre-Islamic, Islamic, colonial and post-colonial. With the beginning of the Indus civilization around the middle of the 3rd millennium B.C., an advanced urban culture developed for the first time in the region, with large structural facilities, some of which survive to this day. Mohenjo Daro, Harappa and Kot Diji belong to the pre-Islamic era settlements. The rise of Buddhism and the Persian and Greek influence led to the development of the Greco-Buddhist style, starting from the 1st century CE.

from the 1st century CE. The high point of this era was reached with the culmination of the Gandhara style. An example of Buddhist architecture is the ruins of the Buddhist monastery Takht-i-Bahi in the northwest province.The arrival of Islam in today''s Pakistan meant a sudden end of Buddhist architecture.However, a smooth transition to predominantly picture-less Islamic architecture occurred. The most important of the few completely discovered buildings of Persian style is the tomb of the Shah Rukn-i-Alam in Multan. During the Mughal era design elements of Islamic-Persian architecture were fused with and often produced playful forms of the Hindustani art. Lahore, occasional residence of Mughal rulers, exhibits a multiplicity of important buildings from the empire, among them the Badshahi mosque, the fortress of Lahore with the famous Alamgiri Gate, the colourful, still strongly Persian seeming Wazir Khan Mosque as well as numerous other mosques and mausoleums. Also the Shahjahan Mosque of Thatta in Sindh originates from the epoch of the Mughals. In the British colonial period, predominantly functional buildings of the Indo-European representative style developed from a mixture of European and Indian-Islamic components. Post-colonial national identity is expressed in modern structures like the Faisal Mosque, the Minar-e-Pakistan and the Mazar-e-Quaid.

**Literature of Pakistan**

The literature of Pakistan covers the literatures of languages spread throughout the country, namely Urdu, Sindhi, Punjabi, Pushto, Baluchi as well as English in recent times and in the past often Persian as well. Prior to the 19th century, the literature mainly consisted of lyric poetry and religious, mysticalpopular materials. During the colonial age the native literary figures, under the influence of the western literature of realism, took up increasingly different topics and telling forms. Today, short stories enjoy a special popularity.

The national poet of Pakistan, Muhammad Iqbal, wrote mainly in the Persian language, and additionally in Urdu. His works are concerned mostly with Islamic philosophy. Iqbal''s most well-known work is the Persian poem volume Asrar-i-Khudi ("the secrets of the even"). The most famous works of early Urdu literature originated in the 14th century. The most well-known representative of the contemporary Urdu literature of Pakistan is Faiz Ahmed Faiz. Sufi Shah Abdul Latif is considered one of the most outstanding mystical poets. Mirza Kalich Beg has been termed the father of modern Sindhi prose. In Punjabi, naats and qawaalis are delivered. The Pushto literature tradition is a cultural link between Pakistan and neighbouring Afghanistan. Extensive lyric poetry and epic poems have been published in Pushto. In Baluchi language songs and ballads are popular.

**Diverse Culture of Pakistan**

Modern Pakistanis are a blend of their Harappan, Indo-Aryan, Indo-Iranian, Saka, Parthian, Kushan, White Hun, Afghan, Arab, Turkic, and Mughal heritage. Waves of invaders and migrants settled down in Pakistan through out the centuries, influencing the locals and being absorbed among them. Thus the region encompassed by modern-day Pakistan is home to the oldest Asian civlization (and one of the oldest in the world after Mesopotamia and Egypt), Indus Valley Civilization (2500 BC - 1500 BC).

The Indus Valley Civilisation collapsed in the middle of the second millennium BCE and was followed by the Vedic Civilisation, which extended over much of northern India and Pakistan. Successive empires and kingdoms ruled the region from the Achaemenid Persian empire around 543 BCE, to Alexander the Great in 326 BCE and the Mauryan empire.

The Indo-Greek Kingdom founded by Demetrius of Bactria included Gandhara and Punjab from 184 BCE, and reached its greatest extent under Menander, establishing the Greco-Buddhist period with advances in trade and culture. The city of Taxila (Takshashila) became a major centre of learning in ancient times - the remains of the city, located to the west of Islamabad, are one of the country''s major archaeological sites.

This stems from the fact that what is now Pakistan has in the past been invaded and occupied by many different peoples, including White Huns, Persians, Arabs, Turks, Mongols and various Eurasian groups. There are differences in culture among the different ethnic groups in matters such as dress, food, and religion, especially where indigenous pre-Islamic customs differ from Islamic practices.